The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

VOL. IX. NO. 10. DECEMBER, 1901. ONE PENNY.

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Christmas.

Out of the midnight stars
Trembling with crystal spars,
In a far eastern clime,
Song came, one happy time,—
Song which was sweet and strong,
Meet for the centuries long,
Came to poor shepherd men
Guarding the lone sheep-pen.

Earth, heavy-hearted, heard,
Caught the far-echoing word,
Peace be to earth, good will!
Marvelled and heard, until
Sense of the meaning came,
Sense of earth's wrong and shame,
Yearning to learn the song
Which it had waited long.

Slowly the chorus rose,
Good will to all,—not those
Alone who think as we.
Thought, for all men, is free!
Then tyrants learned to fear,
And motherhood grew dear,
Childhood became divine,
And home a tender shrine.

Shepherds on life's lone plain,
We watch the planets wane,
And hear, in distant wise,
A singing from the skies!
Slowly to Christ souls turn,
Slowly his song they learn,
The song whose melting might
Shall set all wrongs aright!

EURETTA A. HOYLES.

The Eternal Word and Incarnation:

A REPLY TO PROFESSOR KNIGHT.

In the volume, "Inter Amicos," recently published by Professor William Knight, of St. Andrews, there is one important letter—or rather fragment of a letter—from him to Dr. Martineau, the answer to which, he tells us, has unhappily been lost. It is indeed an unfortunate catastrophe, for it cannot be doubted that Professor Knight's ingenious and subtle plea for the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Eternal Word in the Man Jesus must have been received by Dr. Martineau as a very direct challenge, and must have evoked a rejoinder marked by all his brilliancy of analysis and forcefulness of argument. I am told by the Editor of this magazine that Professor Knight's argument, in the absence of the lost criticism from the master hand, has caught and held many thoughtful persons known to him; and he has asked me to take upon myself the task of tendering such reply as I may be able, in place of the perished document which we would give so much to have in our possession.

It may well seem an audacious compliance to undertake this task. To enter the lists with one of the subtlest and most accomplished of Scottish theologians in itself requires some assurance. But to do so in the stead of that mighty protagonist, whose words must have cloven to the very marrow of their high theme,

is to run the risk of condemnation for the extremity of presumption. Yet it would show no true reverence for Martineau to let the verdict go by default against the truths for which he stood. With all diffidence, then, I gird myself to the combat.

It is the old question of the nature of the Eternal Word, together with the relation of Jesus Christ to that Word and to God, the Father. We may take two points as the nuclei of our philosopher's thinking; and his whole letter is an effort to explain and connect together these two ruling thoughts.

The first is this: that since God is by nature Love, there must have been some object of his love existent prior to the creation of any universe at all; and that that object must have been within his own nature, since there existed no other sphere whatever to contain it.

The second is this: that the perfection of the moral and spiritual character of Jesus Christ was so absolute and so unparalleled that it cannot be accounted for under the ordinary laws and conditions of humanity.

These two points of belief are connected together in this letter by an explanation as far removed from Trinitarian orthodoxy as it is from Martineau's own Christian Theism, namely, this: that, though the person of God is single and cannot be divided, yet within that person there is an element which may be described as the Eternal Son or the Eternal Word—not a separate person at all in the ordinary acceptation of the term, but an element in God's own single personality, which was and is and shall be from all eternity the object of his love; and, further, that this Eternal Word was poured into the man Christ Jesus continuously and increasingly during his earthly life till his humanity became morally and spiritually at one with divinity, and he himself became the absolute Son of God, the "express image of his person."

All this is argued with great subtlety and skill, and with much learning and fervent earnestness. Martineau's answer, we have seen, is lost. Let us, then, imagine that we, having perused the letter through and through, are set to send Professor Knight an answer. We cannot imitate his illustrious correspondent's acuteness of analysis or brilliancy of style; but in our own plain way we will try to frame an answer. How shall it go? Suppose we address the St. Andrews theologian thus:

Dear Professor Knight,—

Your letter interests me deeply. I admire its bold individuality of thought, undaunted by the fear of heresy, and I acknowledge gladly both the acuteness and the truth of many of your subsidiary positions. When, for example, you say that a great truth once suggested may impress itself as true for ever after on the mind, even though the authority which announced it be upset, I am at one with you; and I agree with you that the saying, "I and my Father are one," may reveal a truth never to be lost again to him who meets with it, even though it were to be shown that the Gospel in which it occurs is not historical, and that Jesus himself perhaps never said it.

But in your two main positions I cannot see eye to eye with you, and therefore the argument in which you link them together and explain the one by the other is to me without basis and invalid.

I. You will not, I think, deem me unfair if I state one of your main positions thus: "There is in the person of God an element, which we may call the Eternal Word, which is the object of his love, and which supplied him with an object of love before he had called into being any outward universe at all." At any rate, this is an honest effort on my part to state, in the fewest and plainest words, the things I understand you to mean. This Word of God—even though otherwise called by you the Eternal Son—you assure me is not a separate person in any ordinary meaning of that term, since you are as convinced as I am that the Deity is a single personality. Yet you object to my describing it as simply a function, factor, or relation. You offer as a simile the two foci of an immense ellipse, the two centres from which the radii of that figure diverge, and you suppose a constant movement of affection to be thrilling from each of these foci to the other. But, unsatisfied with your own explanation, you go on to urge that after all "it is confessedly a mystery, beyond the cognisance of the understanding"—a resource which has in all ages been popular with theologians when brought up sharp by the contradictions confronting each other in their own statements. Mystery indeed there is; and we must encounter it again and again when we soar to these high themes; but the plea of mystery never avails to justify us in the assertion of contradictory propositions.

I confess, then, that I am thrown back on the position advanced by Dr. Martineau in an earlier letter to you, and I do not think that he would have admitted that you had solved his difficulty. And I must quote from him his statement that "affection has no reality which does not go forth upon an extrinsic nature—another than the being who feels it," and maintain that a love illustrated by the play of force between the two foci of an ellipse, a love which is all within one Person, even though that Person be Infinite and Transcendent, is no true love at all, certainly bears no analogy to that which we conceive as "the Love of God."

But why is it that you have recourse to this device? Because you assume that there was a time when God had no universe to love, and when he therefore needed an object of love within himself.

Now, I confess I am inclined to agree with you, against Dr. Martineau, when you plead that to suppose a material universe to have existed from all eternity, to be no less eternal than God himself, is to weaken dangerously the foundations of Theism, and that a clear and strong belief in Theism seems to require us to suppose that there was a time when not as yet had God created any universe. Such speculation is indeed adventurous and challenges the rebuke that we are judging in realms in which we are not strong enough to judge. But taking our faculties as they are, I agree with you that strenuous believers in God are well-nigh compelled to think that there was a time when his creative Will had not yet put forth a universe.

But do you not believe that to the consciousness of God the past and the future are as vividly apprehended as the present moment? Do you not believe that to him yesterday is as clear-cut as to-day, and to-morrow as clear-cut as yesterday? He is no purblind creature creeping along from hour to hour, dependent for knowledge of the past on a memory about which hang the heavy fogs of forgetfulness, or for knowledge of the future on the hazard of guess and speculation. To him surely it is all one eternal moment, neither past nor future shadowed by clouds of impenetrable darkness. And therefore, before ever the universe was, according to human ways of computing, it was as present as it is to-day to his apprehension. It was there in thought even as it has been and is and shall be in the human centuries, and all the wealth of his love could go out to it even as it does this day. So that to him there was no need of other object for his love, since to him the universe indeed was eternally present, though to our modes of apprehension it had yet to begin to be and was hidden in the womb of time.

II. But the other great focal idea which characterises your letter is this: that the perfection of the moral and spiritual character of Jesus Christ was so absolute and so unparalleled that it cannot be accounted for under the ordinary laws and conditions of humanity, but involves a pouring of the Eternal Word into him with a completeness entirely unique, and described by you as other than *inspiration* and only to be adequately defined as *incarnation*—the fusing of the Eternal Word—an element of God—in the man Jesus, so that his humanity was exalted to divinity or deity.

This position of yours seems to me to rest on three assumptions, not one of which I can myself allow. These assumptions are, first, the exceeding faultiness of every other son of man who has ever lived, the sublimest prophet no less than the ordinary worldling; secondly, the transcendency of the goodness of Jesus, exalting him to a rank entirely separate from all the rest of the human race; thirdly, the inadequacy of the ordinary spiritual laws to bring forth so unique a character.

Now I believe that I am not at all behind you in my love and reverence for, or my spiritual appreciation of, Jesus Christ; and I am quite certain that your distinguished friend and correspondent was not behind you in these things. Yet I cannot admit any one of your three assumptions.

1. First, in regard to your depreciation of all others the best and purest of our race. You write these words: "In every other prophet of humanity we detect the presence of innumerable flaws, moral chasms, breaks of sympathy, provincialisms, inconsistencies, bias, etc., etc." This, you will admit, is a most grave and sweeping charge; to me it is indeed a startling one. I am sure you find no pleasure in making it, and would not make it save after severe investigation. You are doubtless ready with your evidence. I will, however, content myself with asking you to point out "the innumerable flaws and breaks of sympathy" in Sakyamuni, whom men call the Buddha; and, to go

to quite another sphere, "the innumerable flaws and moral chasms" in Alfred, maker of England. One exception to your generalisation would break down your argument. I have pretty closely studied what is known of these two sons of men. I have failed, and thousands of other students have also failed, to detect the "innumerable flaws" of which you speak. It is necessary to your argument that you should point them out. Meanwhile, I hold by the belief that these two spirits at least were so pure and noble, so selfless in their spirit of service and their love of men, that your statement cannot escape the charge of libel.

2. Your second assumption is the transcendency of the goodness of Jesus, exalting him to a rank entirely separate from all the rest of the human race. Now, I sometimes think that this fencing off of Jesus into a class alone has done more than any other cause to breed the spirit of revolt against his spiritual leadership and moral captaincy. He does not need this safe-guarding; and his quality will have more attractive power and transforming efficacy on others if you leave him there among the great sons of history to assert his own hegemony by the native power of his manhood. But as for the fact itself, I find his goodness to be all of the same quality as that which we most revere and love in other men, an ideal for us all, and not of a make and pattern to be segregated from the great mass of ethical and spiritual force energising, now with ebb and now with flow of power, through the age-long evolution of human history.

Do you not, my dear sir, in spite of your honest effort to empty yourself of bias, bring to the perusal of the Gospels a different method of criticism from that which you apply to other records of exalted humanity? As you yourself find in every other biography "innumerable flaws, moral chasms, breaks of sympathy," might not one approaching the Gospels in the same frame of mind in which you have approached these others, perhaps find some shadow in the cursing of the fig-tree or the destruction of the Gadarene swine, in the awful vehemence of denunciation levelled against a whole order of men high in the religious regard of Israel, in the dramatic action with the whip of small cords in the Temple Court? You will say, and justly say, that such criticisms would betray either an uncritical literalism in accepting incidents or a lack of that sympathetic insight which alone can measure a sublime and radiant character. But if so, must we not suppose in your methods the like defect when you draw such unfavourable conclusions concerning all other bright and particular stars of the human race?

But you tell us that you find throughout the Gospels, even in the parables themselves, a consciousness of authority and an assumption of moral prerogative which would be offensive unless it came from one conscious of that unique incarnation of God which you allege. But surely a man filled with the consciousness of God, with the certainty of the truth which he proclaims, with assurance of the healing and saving power of that temper of sonship to God into which Jesus has won his way, may and must speak with an intensity of assertion which to the unsympathetic might seem presumptuous, even though he draw his conviction and his authority from no other sources than those which God everywhere opens to the pure in heart. You plead that you do not "exaggerate the elevation, the loveliness, and the perfect moral sympathy and unapproachable grandeur of this life." I do not think that you do exaggerate its "elevation and loveliness"—rather that you somewhat distort and mininterpret them. And his "unapproachableness" you do not, it seems to me, so much "exaggerate" as assume on evidence that is inadequate.

3. But let us finally proceed to the connection which you endeavour to establish between the existence of the Eternal Word within the personality of God and the perfection of the man Christ Jesus. I understand you to believe that that perfection was brought about by the inflow of the Eternal Word into the person of Jesus till he became himself "the express image" of God. In one place, I observe, you write that you "see no difference in kind, but only in degree," in the union of the divine and the human in Jesus and in other men. But that concession hardly seems to have much significance, inasmuch as you afterwards throw your whole force into the contention that "inspiration, the inspiration of the divine essence visiting the soul of Jesus, and filling it without measure" does not suffice to account for "all the uniqueness" you witness in his life.

You say that "we have no evidence that the inspiration which lifts men to the higher levels of insight and attainment—all inferior to his—

is competent to the larger task of *perfecting* an individual." And therefore you reject the term "inspiration" as describing the action of the Spirit of God on the soul of Jesus, and adopt instead the word "incarnation." You reserve the word "incarnation" for Jesus only, thus cutting yourself off, I incidentally observe, from using the language of that very popular school of theology amongst us now which speaks of the incarnation of God in all good and holy men.

As for you, you lay down an emphatic distinction between inspiration and incarnation: inspiration for others; incarnation for Jesus. But I could wish that you had more clearly defined what that distinction is, how we are to discriminate between the two. "Inspiration" means literally "breathing in." "Incarnation" means "enfleshing." Both are metaphors from the physical; but the former seems the more comely word for a spiritual idea. However, you insist that in Jesus's case it is incarnation; and you insist on it on the ground that we have no evidence that inspiration would suffice.

I reply that, on the other hand, we have and can have no evidence that inspiration would not suffice. Who is to put a measure to the power of the Spirit of God? If we see his inspiration transforming an Augustine from a reckless sensualist to a spiritual saint, who is to say it can go no further? What can be more arbitrary than thus to limit its efficacy and shut it out from capacity to lift men up to be veritable sons of God? You first put an artificial chasm between the goodness of the best and the goodness of Jesus; and then you say that you must have quite a different process to produce the second from that which creates the first.

And to what end such distinction? If all that is open to us is inspiration, but incarnation—a greater thing—was given to Jesus; then where is our pattern, our example, our brother, the man of like nature with ourselves calling us up to be like to him, to be sons of God with him? Nay, let us trust the divine inbreathing—that great hallowing energy from God which men have named inspiration. Let us believe that it is open to every sincere and humble soul. And taking the hand of Jesus, our brother—our captain too, yet of our flesh and our spirit,—let us move on through the eternity that stretches before us till we too, by God's grace, win our Christhood, our perfect sonship to the Father.

Believe me, dear Professor Knight,
With the most sincere respect,
Very faithfully yours,
RICHARD A. ARMSTRONG.

Liverpool, Nov., 1901.

The Mother's Sacrifice.

"All in the downy cradle
A little infant lay."
BISHOP DOANE.

All in the downy cradle
A little infant lay,
And there the fair young mother
Bent o'er it day by day.
It seemed so pure a blessing,
It was so priceless dear,
That form and face caressing,
Her love was ever near.

And hours and days went o'er them,
The mother and her child;
She, happy in her watching,
Yet happier as it smiled:
Her heart was full of pleasure,
Of gratitude and love,
So rich in this, her treasure,
Her gift from God above.

In one sharp hour of sorrow
The deep blue eyes were closed!
The little voice was silent;
The little hands reposed;
The pearl of life was taken
From that one mother's heart;—
How could she, crushed, forsaken,
With this, her jewel, part?

All in the downy cradle
A little infant lay,
Dead to the world of mortals,
Alive to God alway!
And she whose heart was shaken,
Wept on her bended knee
This prayer: "Thou, who hast taken,
Keep it in heaven for me!"

And thro' the years swift fleeting
There falls a constant ray,—
One little star's soft greeting
To one dear heart to-day.
And though the orbs of glory
Shine o'er the earth each night;
One heart knows its own story,
Its little world of light.

Torquay. E. B. RUSSELL.

A Changed Outlook.

By the Rev. Dr. WARSCHAUER, M.A.

"Among the difficulties they had to face, he reckoned the preaching of the 'New Orthodoxy.' . . . But that would be overcome as the young people grew up, and held loyally to the Church." These sentences, taken from the newspaper report of a speech made at one of our recent meeetings, struck the writer's attention the other day, and wakened a train of thought which perhaps it may not be altogether useless to transfer to paper, if only because it possibly may stir others to thoughts on the same subject. The speaker's remarks showed an apprehension of an important fact which has not yet, apparently, been sufficiently appreciated in our circles; but while they indicated some consciousness of a problem which has to be solved, the published report, at any rate, did not suggest any direction in which its solution might be sought.

The fact to which we have just made allusion, and which we do not believe to be, as yet, nearly as widely recognised as it should be, is that within the last generation such alterations have taken place in the religious life and thought of this country, as must vitally affect our own group of Churches, and as must dictate to them a corresponding change, if not of front, at least of tactics, if they are to live. The problem before them is other and more complex than that which confronted them thirty or even twenty years ago; the solution which then roughly fitted, has to-day become antiquated, hopelessly out of date, and if it continues to be proffered, we shall only, by our want of adaptability, demonstrate our unfitness to survive. As of old, so in our age, the Sphinx offers us the alternative of solving her riddle or of being devoured by her.

Lest, however, allusion to the Sphinx should, by an easy mental transition, suggest to anyone the word "oracular," let us come to plain statements. Thirty or even twenty years ago it must have seemed as though the near future held the promise of signal victories and successes for the form of Christianity known best as Unitarianism. At that time Unitarians still held somewhat of a monopoly as regards a rational view of the scriptures, the open rejection of the doctrine of eternal punishment, and of the more mercenary or "transactional" form of the doctrine of the atonement. With the advent of modern evolutionary science, it appeared as though an enormous impetus would be given to the views which erstwhile had excited such fierce denunciation. Biblical infallibility shaken, the belief in a "Fall" discredited, the miraculous rendered questionable, would not the intelligent and cultured forsake their orthodox errors, and seek new homes among those who for years had taken the position which science now so plainly confirmed? Darwin and Sir Charles Lyell had been seen at Little Portland Street Chapel: would not their followers all over the country go and do likewise?

Such expectations must have appeared to many to possess a considerable amount of legitimateness: the disconcerting fact is, that they have not been justified by events. That we have, in thirty years, established about twice thirty new "causes" is true; but whether Unitarianism is in the Great Britain of the opening Twentieth Century a more appreciable influence than a generation ago, may well be doubted.

What, then, has happened to falsify our forecasts? Not that science and Biblical criticism have been beaten out of the field—that it would be absurd to maintain; but that the orthodox churches have shown a degree of capability of adapting themselves to new environments, greater than we had suspected them of. If not without many searchings of heart, yet without any very violent crisis, orthodoxy, after the first shock, began to set about accepting the verdicts of the biologists and critics, began to undertake the task of reconstruction, and *in the main and on the whole has succeeded beyond all expectation.* It is as though people had been asking—with considerable astonishment, but generally speaking without any panic or hysteria—"So then the Bible is *not* literally inspired, and the earth was *not* made in six days, and Adam did *not* fall and involve the whole race in a destruction from which only the vicarious suffering of Christ could save them? We should not have thought so; but, of course, we accept the new conclusions." We are very far from suggesting that such a surrender of the old positions has been made universally; it has nevertheless been made

very widely, with more or less thoroughness, more or less willingness, more or less celerity.

Such a development, it must be confessed, had not been expected; indeed, as already observed, it is by no means certain that its taking place, and the new conditions thereby introduced, have been at all adequately realised. What has happened is this, that thousands and thousands of intelligent and religious people do not nowadays by any means find it necessary to go to the Unitarian Church to hear from the pulpit views in accordance with the new knowledge of nature and the Bible which, in its general outline, has become popular property. That the orthodoxy of to-day thinks very differently of the atonement from the orthodoxy of the last generation is well known; and rarely does the modern orthodox preacher affront his hearers by enunciating any doctrine of everlasting torments. The monopoly of religious liberalism has passed from Unitarianism; and hence, "among the difficulties Unitarians have to face, must be reckoned the preaching of the New Orthodoxy."

Yes, it is indeed a difficulty; and it is not to be met, plainly, by persevering in the same old way, just as though nothing had been taking place. The old weapons are inapplicable to the new situation that has arisen; and to many a Unitarian place of worship nothing more fatal could happen than the appointment of an enlightened minister to the pulpit of a neighbouring Congregational Church. Of course, if that only means that "the truth" is not popular, but that *we* at any rate are the possessors and exponents of "the truth,"—to the truth we must adhere, nor swerve from it by the fraction of an inch, be the consequences what they may; but it is just those initial assumptions, which to our thinking require re-examining.

To us it appears rather that, if the New Orthodoxy is winning all along the line, while Unitarianism just holds its own, it is not only because the former has "annexed," or "adapted itself to" the established results of modern thought; it is because those who preach it are in an all-important particular better equipped for appealing to the human heart than Unitarians have too often been—because they have seized hold of a vital aspect of truth, which we have unfortunately neglected. Not only have we, as seems to be admitted by the speaker whose words furnish us our text, far too often contented ourselves with "providing a cold, intellectual service," which has "inevitably lost us our young people," but the temper of those services has but too accurately reflected an abstract theology which contained no sufficient nurture for the human soul. What, then, is the life-giving element which *these* churches lacked, while *those* possessed it? Is it not this, that *these* have been seeking God, and proclaimed His presence, everywhere: *those* found that presence where it is most manifestly revealed, viz., in Christ? The profound and almost intuitive conviction that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself," has been the very strength and life of orthodoxy, which has enabled it to absorb many new ideas, and to drop many old ones, without hurt; while the absence of that note accounts to our thinking for the comparative weakness and unprogressiveness of Unitarianism. While men hear that note struck in orthodox churches, but listen for it in vain from Unitarian pulpits, they will hardly be persuaded to join the latter, even though these may be a degree more "advanced" and "up-to-date" in some respects; for instinctively, without learned argument or analysis, they know that the Living Christ is the first condition of a Living Church, and that the simplest way to the Father is through the Son.

What, then, must we do? Well, the very first thing *not* to do, is to adopt the attitude of the superior critic, to abandon, *i.e.*, as unworthy, all those charges which one hears from time to time made against the liberal-orthodox, and which accuse them of purchasing their overwhelming success by intellectual dishonesty. Such charges, preferred against so many and so eminent professors of religion, are to our mind very shocking, and hardly decent; on the other hand, we know of an unimaginative literalism, which often forgets that the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

What we have to do, is to exchange the attitude of the critic for the unaccustomed one of the learner; if the secret of the liberal-orthodox be—as for our own part we doubt not it is—that while casting overboard many notions of an earlier age, no longer suitable to this, they

have preserved intact their intense Christian sentiment, their living love for a Living Lord, then it is for us, *first to inquire with an open mind how far that sentiment may be justified, and then, in the degree in which we may find it so to cultivate it among ourselves.*

Two things we think it right to state here explicitly, in order to guard ourselves against all possibility of misinterpretation. Firstly, that in our advocacy of certain views we are actuated, not by any consideration that they may be "profitable," but by the conviction, humbly but earnestly held, that they are *true.* And secondly—this is no proposal to "give up Unitarianism." It is a proposal for Unitarianism to adapt itself and its methods to a changed outlook and changed conditions. That theism—or even "Christian" theism, *i.e.*, theism infiltrated with Christian ethics, but not based upon loyalty to, and personal love of, Christ—ever provided spiritual sustenance fit for the souls of common men and women, we gravely doubt; that its tendency is to "lose" the young people brought up under it, is matter of history. For our churches, this is really—and will, we believe, in less than another generation be seen to be—a life-and-death question; for so much of evolutionary teaching at any rate has passed the stage of mere hypothesis, and taken rank as a universal law, that "adaptation to environment is life; want of adaptation is death."

J. WARSCHAUER.

The Seed Sower.

By post, 1/6 per annum.

Special terms for churches taking 50 copies and above.

The *Seed Sower* is localised by the Western Union (all the churches); the South Wales Union (all the churches); Essex and Unity Churches, London, Belfast, Hull, Gorton, Hyde, Mansfield, all the Birmingham Churches and many others.

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"Saints and Shrines."

II.—ST. AIDAN AND LINDISFARNE.

Last time I told you the story of St. Columba and Iona: of Columba's noble work and holy life, of Iona's supreme place at the head of the British Church in the sixth century, and of its solitary glory to-day. Time would only permit me to speak of these things as history; I must leave to your own imagining, or, better still, your own reading, the many lovely legends, the poetic associations, and the rich romance, which have found their local and spiritual dwelling place in this Island of the Blest.

I now take up the story again, and ask you to follow me through another chapter of this wonderful book of the Christian faith.

Among the Christians at Iona, soon after the death of Columba, was Oswald, Prince of Northumbria, whose kingdom had been conquered, and his father killed, by Penda, the King of Mercia. During his exile at Iona, the fugitive Oswald was converted, and in 635 he returned and beat the heathen usurper at Heavenfield, where a memorial chapel marks the deed. It is said that the night before the battle Oswald dreamed a dream, in which he saw the tall form of Columba of Iona, covering with his mantle the whole camp of his people; and he heard Columba's voice, saying "Be strong and play the man to-day, for I am with thee." And in the early dawn he raised a cross, and kneeling with his men, prayed to the true and living God to help him in his need. Great as was this act, it was yet greater in its result. For Oswald at once determined to introduce the new faith amongst the rough and warlike people over whom he ruled. By the might of arms he had reconquered his land: by the might of the cross he would achieve a greater conquest. And so he sent to Iona, his own religious home, for a missionary preacher to Christianise Northumbria. And they sent a monk called Corman, who, however, soon came back again, saying that such a barbarous nation was quite beyond the reach of conversion. "It is of no use," he declared to the assembled monks, "to attempt to convert such people as these." "Nothing," he said, "could be made of the English: they were a race

of untamable savages: their spirit was stubborn, even barbarous." But a voice was raised in gentle protest. "Did you not forget the Apostle's habit and feed them with meat instead of milk? Did you not expect too much and too soon from your teaching, which was too high for them?" All eyes were fixed on the speaker, and all hearts felt that he was the man for Northumbria; and so they sent him instead of Corman, and his name was *Aidan*. Where did he take up his difficult work? He might have gone to the capital, York, or hung about the King's court, or asked for some favoured sheltered spot in this kingdom, which extended

LINDISFARNE PRIORY.

from the Humber to the Tweed. But he chose instead a cave with bleak stretch of wind-swept sand which twice a day is joined to the mainland, and twice a day is a sea-girt island, according to the state of the tide—

> For, with the flow and ebb, its style
> Varies from continent to isle.—*Marmion.*

And this island's name was Lindisfarne, to be later known as "Holy Island," in memory of its saintly record. There are many sacred spots in England, but none can be more sacred to an English Christian than the Holy Island of Lindisfarne, and no shrine is worthier of reverent visiting than that of the good and gentle St. Aidan. Why did he choose this island waste, amidst the quicksands and the shoals? Some say for seclusion, that he might not be hindered in his devotion; some say for safety, from the danger of warlike fray; some say for its proximity to Bamburgh, a royal borough, with its mighty fortress-rock and castle. But however strong these reasons were, there was one, I think, yet stronger, and that was his love of Iona. He loved the Celtic ways and he loved the Celtic scenes. Here, in some measure, he could carry on the same monastic idea—the island colony encircled by the separating sea, the sacred sanctuary away from the world's activity, the mainland journey of the missionary to spread true Christianity, the hill-top from which to look out on the panorama of coast line and sea—all this must have been an irresistible attraction to the devout monk who had just left his beloved Scotch retreat. And although the East coast cannot compare for grandeur with the West coast of Caledonia, it served as a welcome reminder of his former home and master. Thus Aidan become a second Columba, and Lindisfarne a second Iona! And if there is magic and

dream in the very name of the one, is there not a sweet cadence, a voice as of singing, in "St. Aidan and Lindisfarne—St. Aidan and Lindisfarne?"

And now the Northumbrian King had, indeed, found the right man. We may even put it the other way, and say that now the Iona monk had found the right monarch. Each helped the other, each needed the other, for the monk could only speak Celtic, and the monarch himself had to act as interpreter, whereas the King, though full of ardour, was no teacher, and needed, therefore, his Christian instructor. Thus the piety of Aidan and the zeal of Oswald went hand in hand, and each was the other's fast friend; so that together they set a double Christian example to the people, and by the beauty of their personal lives spread the Christian Gospel. What a noble, "truly beautiful" picture; what a subject for a painter! What wonder that even the rough Northumbrians flocked to listen to their Saint and King, and felt the winning charm of the new religion. Fifteen thousand, according to some accounts, were baptised in seven days. Churches were built in all directions to receive the willing worshippers; further helpers from Iona came to join Aidan in his labour; and thus Christian civilisation and the fame of Lindisfarne spread north and south, and effected the conversion of the Anglo-Saxon.

Let us look at Aidan's own personality. Bede, fortunately, has described him closely. He was a man of the utmost gentleness, moderation, and piety; "gentle St. Aidan" he is called frequently. He promoted earnestly peace and charity, purity and humility; he neither sought nor loved the things of the world, and despised all pride and vainglory; he did not give way to anger or avarice, and was strictly temperate in all his habits; he was full of tenderness for all sufferers, and of righteous sternness towards powerful offenders; he took pains to fulfil diligently works of faith, love, and piety, and to omit not one of the duties prescribed in the Scriptures. His course of life was so different, Bede says, from the slothfulness of the times, that those who bore him company, whether monks or laity, were employed in meditating on texts, or learning and reciting psalms. This was their daily employment, wheresoever they went, and if it happened, which was but seldom, that he was invited to eat with the King, he went with one or two clerks, and having taken a small repast, made haste to be gone with them, either to read or write. Whatsoever was given him by the King or rich men he distributed immediately amongst the poor. His life was simple, his work direct. He was wont to traverse both town and country on foot, never on horseback, unless compelled by some urgent need; and wherever, in his way, he saw any, either rich or poor, he invited them, if unbelievers, to receive the mystery of the faith; or, if they were believers, to confirm them in the faith, and to stir them up by words and example to the performance of alms and good works. Amongst the stories of St. Aidan, illustrating his own prompt-giving, Bede tells us that Oswin, a later King, gave him a fine horse to use on rough and difficult journeys. But some time after, a poor man meeting him, and asking alms, he immediately dismounted, and gave to the beggar the horse, with all its trappings. This being told to King Oswin he said to Aidan, "Why did you give to the poor man the horse that was to be all your own? Had I not others good enough for him, and not this which I had especially chosen?" But Aidan made answer, "Is that foal of a mare more dear than that son of God?" (the beggar).

Such was Aidan of Lindisfarne, the monk from Iona, the planter of Christianity in Northumbria, the evangeliser, the missionary preacher, the builder of churches, monasteries, schools, where English children were taught learning and discipline. He made such an impression by his spirituality and sanctity, his labour and his prayer, that his fame was as that of Columba. "It was the highest commendation of his doctrine with all men," as Bede truly declared, "that he taught no otherwise than he had lived." And what shall be said of Oswald, his friend, for the monk preacher and the monk King cannot be separated in our mind. He was one of those rare souls in advance of their age, who seem to combine all the virtues. He was a great King and overlord of men, leading, ruling, governing his kingdom; but he was also as devout as a cloistered saint, loving religion and quiet meditation, praying, studying, church-building, thinking less of the warlike glories of his house than of the peaceful victories of the Cross. Two

other Kings of history, and two only, are worthy to be named and ranked with this monarch saint, and they are Alfred of England and St. Louis of France. The moral power which reached its height in Alfred first dawned in Oswald. They represent a new type of kingship—a blending of Church and State. It is no wonder that Oswald won his way into all hearts, and was loved with enthusiasm and reverence. But for his kingly assistance Aidan's work would have been far more difficult than it was. His reign lasted only eight eventful years, but he did in that time more toward the making of Christian England than any other Sovereign, save Alfred. His end was on the battlefield, being surprised by the Mercians and slain. Seeing death to be inevitable he ended his life with prayer for the souls of his men—

> For bodies, whatsoe'er betide
> On souls, O God, have mercy, cried
> King Oswald as he fell and died.

No wonder that he was afterwards sainted, or that the spot where he fell seemed greener and fairer for his spilled blood, or that miraculous powers and virtues were ascribed to the relics, the prayers, the word of this King, beloved of God. He is a worthy hero, indeed, of the early Christian world; and if parents want Christian names for their boys let them remember Oswald. He was interred by Aidan at Lindisfarne, with an intense sorrow almost too personal to imagine. but afterwards removed in St. Cuthbert's coffin to Durham. One story alone, and that well known, shall help us to remember this Christian King. On a certain Easter Sunday a silver dish of food was set on the Royal board, and Aidan was about to bless the bread when there entered a Thane, saying that a crowd of poor outside were begging alms from the King. Oswald at once, thereupon ordered the food to be carried to them, and the dish itself to be broken and divided amongst them. On which Aidan seized the King's right hand in his and said, "May this hand never perish." And we say, "May his memory never decay," and whenever we enter or worship within a church dedicated to this good man, we will think with gratitude of what he did for God in helping Aidan to Christianise England.

For nine years more did Aidan carry on his labour in his little chapel on Lindisfarne, or on the mainland close by. Then Oswin, his second king friend, was betrayed and murdered, and Aidan felt that his own days were numbered. Twelve days after, he was over at Bamborough, when a sudden illness struck him down, and he was laid on the ground near the western end of the little church, which preceded the one that to-day appropriately bears his name. There he breathed his last, in sight of Lindisfarne; on the 31st August, 651, and his day in the calendar has the fitting designation "The rest of Aidan."

And if we visit Lindisfarne to-day, what shall we see with the bodily or spiritual eye? We feel as we cross its tide-bound inlet that we are stepping off the mainland of fact into a dreamland of mystery where things of which we have only read in story are going to live again in memory. The curlews that crowd the narrow strip of land, and chant their sad note to the wandering wind, seem to set the right tone to our thought. The village is small and not beautiful; the island is flat, save for the one castle-crowned rock; the one sight which attracts the eye, and creates great expectancy is of course the ruined priory. And when once you enter its quiet space, and gaze on its rich and lonely ruins, you feel, as in few other places, the spell of age, the witchery of the past, the enchantment of religion. We are not, however, looking at the actual building of St. Aidan, though the older work of the Saxon is visible beneath the Norman, but we are standing on the very spot where Aidan prayed and built. And so it is the thought of the earliest Christian community that really makes this island a sacred sanctuary, and we bow our minds in reverence before its holiest and earliest memory.

Are there—can there be—any events in the whole of the Christian history, outside the New Testament story, more interesting, more fascinating to the Englishman of to-day than those which have made England a Christian land, and handed down to our children a Christian tradition? May the faith of our fathers and all true souls make our hearts beat high with joy whenever we follow their story to-day!

FRANK K. FREESTON.

Flavel says: He makes a bad bargain always who sells his conscience with his goods."

Yuletide.

In spite of all that has been written on the subject, it is hard to imagine that a day will ever come when the interest of Yule-tide will have been exhausted; when the story of its ancient customs, beliefs, and traditions will fail to give pleasure; when the preacher will have ceased to proclaim the glad tidings of peace and good-will; when housewives will have forgotten the "receipts for plum-pudding and mince-pies;" when the old-world heartiness and neighbourly kindness associated with the season will have died out; when men will wonder what their simple ancestors could have meant when they sang the quaint carol:—

"Wolcum be ye that arn her,
Wolcum alle and mak good cher,
Wolcum alle another yer,
Wolcum yol!"

In any case that day has not come yet. Christmas and Yule-tide are still magical words. If there be any aspect of the festival to which one might have fancied that nothing new could be added, it is its history through the bygone centuries. We are all familiar with the connection between Christmas and the wild *Saturnalia* of ancient Rome. We know that this period of coarse revelry and intoxication became associated with the worship of the Sun-god Mithra, and that about the year 273 of our era the feast was fixed for the 25th December. Then, as "it could only be by rivalling the pagan revelries that the Christian ceremonies could gain the ascendancy," the festival of the Nativity—transferred, some say, from the last month of the Jewish to the last month of the Christian year—was established at its present date by Pope Julius about the middle of the fourth century.

From this collocation of the orgies of the heathen and the holy jubilation of the Christian, sprang up, we are told, the chief characteristics of Yule-tide — the mummery and miracle-plays, the feasts of fools and asses, the boy-bishops, lords of misrule and abbots of unreason.

This account of the "hallowed and gracious time" is, however, singularly imperfect. The old-school antiquarian overlooked the important fact that to the making of our Christmas there also came the great pagan festival of the Scandinavian Mid-winter.

The name "Christmas," it may be mentioned in passing, does not appear to have been traced farther back than the year 1090, when the term "Yule" and the "Mid-winter" of the Saxon Chronicle yielded place to "Cristes mæsse;" and with regard to the word "Yule," it seems that we must abandon the attempt to connect it with a "wheel" and the turning of the sun in its annual course. Yule, yole, iula, géola, and geól meant a time of merry outcry, festive "yowling," high-pitched singing—a conclusion to which our latter-day adjective "jolly" gives some countenance.

It may be questioned whether the Mid-winter sacrifice, the Midsvetrarblot, or Jolablot, with its *Sonar golt*, or atonement-boar consecrated to Frey, its mighty eating and ale-driking did not count for as much in our British festival as the old *Saturnalia* did. In one of its features it was strikingly in harmony with the Christian season, for the object of the sacrifice was to ensure a good year and peace. How naturally welcome to these strong and adventurous Vikings must, after all, have been the Christmas tidings—peace and goodwill!

But the new-school antiquarians, the experts in compartive folk-lore, have succeeded in tracing Yule-tide and its merry-makings into an antiquity far beyond the carousing Norsemen and the drunken slavery of Rome. It is not for us to follow them through the sequence of evidence by which they show that the old mummery and masquing and guising are a sort of middle stage of development between the modern drama and the uncouth war-dances and mimetic ceremonies of our half-savage Aryan proto-parents. Still less can we undertake to suggest or to criticise the arguments and testimony by which they connect the burning of the Yule-log of to-day with the obscure and mystic rites of that prehistoric time when each man worshipped the ancestral spirit of his house, or when, as Professor Max Müller has it, "the hearth was the first altar, the father the first elder, the wife and the children and slaves the first congregation gathered together round the sacred fire."

It is evident, therefore, that on the history of Christmas the last word has not yet been said; and, indeed, there may be a great deal more to add.

Every man desires to live long; but no man would be old.

A "Preaching Order."

In the powerful and interesting address given by Mr. Jacks at the opening of the new session of Manchester College, the speaker suggested the founding of a new "Preaching Order," not to supply existing churches with ministers, but to go up and down the country disseminating the ideas and principles of Liberal Religion. In public halls, theatres, market-places, at street corners, fairs, or wherever men congregate, these preachers are to proclaim the glad news of a reasonable, human, and attractive faith. Pledged to obedience under the rule of some General or President of the Order, they would go where they were sent quite independent of any local committee. After their usual college course they would enter upon a thorough homiletical and oratorical preparation, under the direction of the President, and with a view to making them effective and popular speakers. They would be required to take the renunciant's vow, to sacrifice everything for a certain period of years unto the order, which would, in return, provide them with a modest income for their wants. Their mission and services would be entirely free from pecuniary consideration.

There is something fascinating about the proposal. One can imagine that such an order, by appealing to the noblest side of young, generous and enthusiastic souls, might move them to sacrifice all for Truth and Religion. It is not difficult to conceive the interest that might be aroused in the public mind by the self-sacrifice of educated men in such a cause and after such a manner. Given the right men, willing to submit themselves for a couple of years to the necessary rhetorical discipline, and after that to the orders of their Chief, and a deep mark might be made on the religious thought and life of England.

But, alas! we may summon prophets from the vasty deep, but will they come? The whole success of such an order would depend on its General, who must be a man of commanding personality, capable of winning the devoted loyalty of the young and enthusiastic, himself the first and completest of the renunciants, skilled in all the arts of public speech, an efficient organiser, and a born ruler of men. But such a man, a modern Dominic, will not appear at the call of a College Committee, and when he does come forth he will found his own "order." John Wesley and General Booth were not summoned by others to inspire and train their companies of preachers, any more than were Dominic and Francis. They took the field under a divine and overwhelming impulse, and never offered themselves as candidates for a post.

Nevertheless, while the dream of a Preaching Order must wait for its MAN, who will assuredly take his own course, and attract his own disciples, Mr. Jacks has done good service in emphasising our need, the church's need, the world's need, of persuasive preaching. At the present moment a certain tendency to depreciate preaching may be noticed among us. In the presence of a much-needed revival of interest in worship, appreciation of its purpose, care for its details, preaching is sometimes spoken of as if it were time the sermon took a back seat. One is accustomed to this in churches where *priestly* functions are first and foremost, but it is not a little surprising to meet with it in our Free Churches. Sixty years ago, a writer in one of the famous "Tracts for the Times" said—"We would not be thought entirely to depreciate preaching as a means of doing good. It may be necessary in a weak and languishing state, etc." On the contrary, good preaching is, and always has been, the work of a church having any pretence to be a teacher of truth. Every revival of religion during the last two thousand years has been the result of a revival of preaching power. Happily the day is long past since the prayers and praises of the church were looked upon as the mere "preliminaries" of the sermon. The emphasis on worship which marks our generation is a beautiful and healthy sign. Everywhere a great improvement of the service is to be noted. But it also is to be noted that wherever there is good preaching, it is just there where the most careful thought is spent upon the conduct of worship. The two go hand in hand. A minister to-day is active in many things besides preaching, but unless he is impressed by the immense importance and responsibilities of the pulpit, no devout and artistic care spent over his "services" will avail. Jesus and his Apostles were preachers. It is the preacher, not the priest, who comes to the front

in the early days of the Gospel. It is quite clear that it was the marvellous speaking power of men like Peter and Paul which caused the new faith to run and be glorified. It has been so ever since. The decay of preaching in the middle ages corresponds with the decay of faith and morals. Now and then a great figure starts out from the surrounding darkness—a Gregory the Great or a Venerable Bede appears—yet, on the whole, the times are evil for preaching. But in the thirteenth century we see and hear preaching again, and "the birds of dawn begin to sing." Aquinas, Dominic, Bernard of Clairvaux, Iauler of Strasburg, St. Francis, were all leaders in a revival of preaching, a revival that ran side by side with the labours of Dante, Thomas A'Kempis, Bernard of Cluny, and the builders of the great cathedrals. The wonderful flowering of the pulpit at the Reformation had its harbingers and forerunners in John Gerson, in John Wycliffe, in Huss, and Savonarola. They were all preachers of power and charm.

Then at the Reformation preaching assumed the leading place in the new movement, and so vigorous and influential did the pulpit become, that for a while it actually guided the destinies of nations and shaped the policy of princes. Or to come to more modern times, it was the revival of preaching under Whitfield and Wesley that saved England from barbarism in the eighteenth century; it was the marvellous preaching of Newman which gave life and soul to the Oxford movement: it was the preaching of Chalmers which re-kindled the fervour of Scottish piety. Who can over-estimate the influence of such preachers as Guthrie, F. D. Maurice, Stanley, George Dawson, Baldwin Browne, Beecher, Dale, and, above all, Robertson of Brighton?

The importance of preaching! Mr Jacks does well to emphasise it. For preaching has a special place and value in our Free Churches; it is the very breath of their nostrils; unless our ministers can preach they have no *raison d'être.* Preaching is their supreme although, by no means their only function. Yet everything else could be carried on by the church in the absence of the preacher. Worship, Sunday Schools, benevolent enterprises, the visitation of the sick, weddings, funerals, all these, and many other offices of the church, could be discharged by laymen, and without specially appointed ministers. But preaching touches another plane; the prophetic gift must needs be sought out, subjected to a severe discipline and set apart, if its dews are to refresh the fields the Lord loveth; and the minister who cannot persuasively preach is manifestly out of place in our church economy.

JOSEPH WOOD.

Night in Florence.

Yes, this is Galileo's moon! These stars—
Archangels' crystal lance-heads—Dante's eyes
Have pierced, to find the Love of Paradise;
This turbulent Arno, foaming o'er its bars,
'Neath April's moon, like fretted silver spilled,
Hath known the gaze of Michael Angelo;
Those Apennines, still cressetted with snow,
Savonarola's stormy soul have stilled.
Peace, peace, mad heart! Why rage against thy pain?
Would'st thou escape earth's dole, while these—a band
High as the stars—have known each throb and ache?
Would'st thou not learn as they? Ah! great thy gain,
If, midst thy purging fire, thou stretch a hand
Thro' the Unseen, these comrades' hands to take.

DOROTHEA HOLLINS.

Wise Sayings.

Crates says: "One part of knowledge consists in being ignorant of things which are not worthy to be known."

Pythagoras says: "No man is free who cannot restrain himself."

Demosthenes says: "Everything great is not always good; but all good things are great."

Diogenes says: "To reach perfection it is necessary to have faithful friends or else implacable enemies; since WE MUST BE TAUGHT OUR FAULTS either by the admonitions of the one, or the taunts and invectives of the other."

Socrates says: "That man knows most who is best acquainted with his own ignorance."

News from the Field.

WEST BROMWICH.—The Rev. F. A. Homer will close his ministry here at the end of the year, and in the spring will leave for Canada for the benefit of his health.

NORWICH.—The Rev. A. Hall, M.A., has been elected a member of the School Board.

MACCLESFIELD.—The Rev. W. G. Cadman, M.A., has accepted an invitation to Macclesfield, and will begin his ministry here at the end of March.

HIGHGATE.—The Rev. R. H. Greaves, of Troy, U.S.A., will enter on the ministry of Highgate Church, early in the new year.

TAUNTON.—Rev. G. V. Crook has been installed as minister of the Mary Street congregation. The Revs. A. N. Blatchford, B.A., J. Collins Odgers, B.A., and T. B. Broadrick took part in the services. Mr. Crook was formerly an Irish Methodist minister, and had to leave that communion on account of his views on everlasting punishment.

LOUGHBOROUGH.—The Rev. Peter Dean, late of Walsall, has been welcomed as minister of Victoria Street Church. The Mayor, Mr. W. More, was in the chair, and the Revs. H. Gow, B.A., W. Lindsay, and W. G. Price, took part in the meeting.

SCARBOROUGH.—The Rev. Ottwell Binns has been installed in the ministry of Wentborough Church. The following friends, with others, took part in the services:—Revs. C. Hargrove, M.A., Dendy Agate, B.A., W. C. Bowie, Mr. H. J. Morton, J.P., Mr. Ion Pritchard, etc.

WOOD GREEN, LONDON, N.—A new church has been opened at Newnham Road. This event crowns an effort carried on at first by two or three pioneers in a hired assembly-room, and later by a small but energetic society of worshippers gathered together by Rev. J. Mummery, Ph.D. The new church is not the first building erected by the congregation, Unity Hall, which stands on an adjoining site, having served their needs for some years. Aided by a loan from the recently-founded Permanent Chapel Building Fund — a "twentieth century" enterprise—they have now completed a scheme which has involved from first to last an outlay of more than £6000. The new church, which will seat over 300, is modelled on Dutch Renaissance lines, and is evidently meant to be a congregational "home." It was filled to overflowing at the opening service, and its acoustic properties were found to be excellent. Rev. W. G. Tarrant, of Wandsworth, conducted the service, and preached on "The Revelation of Good to Mankind" (Micah vi. 8). Mr. W. Blake Odgers, K.C., who presided at the meeting which followed, gave an eloquent address expounding Unitarian views and principles Rev. W. Wooding, Councillor Holding, and others also gave congratulatory addresses, and Mr. J. Sudbery (secretary) made a statement as to finance, from which it appeared that about £1400, including the loan, remains to clear the building of debt. Dr. Mummery preached on Sunday, and despite the foggy weather there were large congregations.

CLIFTON.—A newly-built church parlour and lecture hall, capable of seating 120, generously provided for the growing needs of Oakfield Road Church, by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Thomas, was successfully inaugurated by a Christmas Sale of Work, held on November 12th. The Rev. Dr. Warschauer, M.A., in a brief introductory address, expressed the indebtedness of the church to the munificence of their old and valued friends, to whom they owed these handsome and commodious premises, in which they might see the outward and visible sign of the reviving fortunes and the thoroughly healthy and hopeful spirit animating the congregation. Miss Gertrude Thomas (who was presented with a beautiful bouquet on behalf of the Junior Working Party by its youngest member, Miss Mollie Hartland), in opening the sale, referred in a few happily-chosen sentences to the energy and enthusiasm of the band of willing workers who gathered around Mrs. Warschauer, and to the increasing number of societies and week-day agencies which had of late years sprung up in connection with Oakfield Road Church, and which rendered such additional accommodation as was now provided a necessity.

MANCHESTER (UPPER BROOK STREET).—A bazaar, in the form of an old English village, was held in the local Town Hall on Nov. 12th. The city was wrapped in dense fog on the opening day, but after that the weather improved, and the attendances were very satisfactory. The bazaar was opened on successive days by Sir J. T. Brunner, Bart., M.P., Alderman W. B. Bowring, J.P., Mr. William Long, J.P., and Councillor Marsden, and the chair was occupied in turn by Mr. J. Dendy, Colonel Pilcher, the Rev. S. A. Steinthal, and Mr. D. A. Little. The opening addresses bore generally upon the relation of a Free Church to the public life of the city and country, and the present urgent need for a higher standard in public affairs, which Sir J. T. Brunner further emphasised by a weighty reference to the Concentration Camps in South Africa. All the gentlemen engaged in the opening ceremonies set an excellent example to customers in their generous patronage of the various stalls, which Sir John Brunner supplemented by a most handsome donation of £50. The total result of sales and subscriptions was £900. A supplementary sale of work will be held in the Church School, when it is hoped that the £1000 required will be completed.

LIVERPOOL (THE ANCIENT CHAPEL).—An "Ancient Chapel Guild" has been established, with a considerable membership, its objects being formulated as follows:—"I resolve to abstain from all intoxicating drink taken as a beverage, and to do what I can to promote temperance in all things, both in my own life and in the life of others. And I resolve not to injure or give pain to any living creature needlessly, and not willingly to destroy any beautiful thing, but to cherish kindness, gentleness and peace in all possible and reasonable ways. And as a member of the Ancient Chapel Guild I will strive to do my part to make its fellowship strong and its work useful, and I promise faithfully to keep its laws."

EXETER.—A guild—the object of which is "to promote the study and practice of religion"—has recently been formed in connection with George's Chapel. At the first regular meeting, held in November, a most interesting paper was read by Miss Davey, on the "Religion of the Ancient Greeks," which was followed by discussion and by the reading of passages from Pindar, Plato, &c., illustrative of Greek religions and usages.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

A Christmas Legend.

"Inasmuch as ye did it to one of the least, ye did it unto me.—JESUS.

"Why does the Lord Christ never come?"
Asked a child in a shy, soft way;
"Time after time we have prayed that He
Would make one of our company,
Just as we did to-day;
But He never has come for all our prayer,—
Do you think He would if I set Him a chair?"

Even as he spoke the latch was raised,
The door swung wide, and lo!
A pale little beggar boy stood there,
With shoeless feet, and flying hair,
All powdered white with snow.
"I have no food, I have no bed,
For Christ's sake take me in," he said.

The startled guests were silent all,
The father dumbly gazed;
The shivering beggar he stood still—
The snow-flakes melting at their will—
Bewildered and amazed
At the strange hush; and nothing stirred,
And no one uttered a welcoming word.

Till, glad and joyful, the same dear child
Upraised his voice and said,
"The Lord has heard us, now I know,
He could not come Himself, and so
He sent this boy instead,
His chair to fill, His place to take,
For us to welcome for His sake."

Then quick and zealous every one
Sprang from the table up,
The chair for Jesus ready set
Received the beggar cold and wet,
Each pressed his plate and cup,
"Take mine! take mine!" they urged and prayed,
The beggar thanked them, half dismayed.

And as he feasted and quite forgot
His woes in the new content,
The ivy and holly garlanded
Round the old rafters overhead
Breathed forth a rich, strange scent,
And it seemed as if in the green-hung hall
Stood a Presence unseen which blessed them all.

O lovely Legend of olden time,
Be thou as true to-day;
The Lord Christ stands by every door,
Veiled in the person of His poor,
And all our hearts can pray,
"Lord Jesus Christ, be Thou our guest,
And share the bread which Thou hast blessed."

Winter Time.

Late lies the wintry sun a-bed,
A frosty, fiery sleepy head;
Blinks but an hour or two; and then
A blood-red orange, sets again.

Before the stars have left the skies,
At morning in the dark I rise;
And shivering in my nakedness,
By the cold candle, bathe and dress.

Close by the jolly fire I sit
To warm my frozen bones a bit;
Or, with a rein-deer sled, explore
The colder countries round the door.

When to go out my nurse doth wrap
Me in my comforter and cap;
The cold wind burns my face, and blows
Its frosty pepper up my nose.

Black are my steps on silver sod;
Thick blows my frosty breath abroad;
And tree and house, and hill and lake,
Are frosted like a wedding cake.

From "A Child's Garden of Verses,"

By R. L. STEVENSON.

Best as it is.

If none were sick and none were sad,
What service could we render?
I think, if we were always glad,
We scarcely could be tender.
Did our beloved never need
Our patient ministration,
Earth would grow cold and miss, indeed,
Its sweetest consolation.
If sorrow never claimed our heart
And every wish were granted,
Patience would die and hope depart,
Life would be disenchanted.

J. BESEMERES.

A Child's Grace.

Here, a little child, I stand,
Holding up my either hand;
Cold as paddocks* though they be,
Yet I lift them, Lord, to Thee,
For a benison to fall
On our meat, and on us all.—R. HERRICK.

*Frogs.

Midland Educational Company, Limited, Birmingham.